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Security Council
Fifty-second Year

Provisional

3811th Meeting
Thursday, 14 August 1997, 10.30 a.m.
New York

President:	Sir John Weston	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
Members:	Chile	Mr. Somavía
	China	Mr. Chen Weixiong
	Costa Rica	Mr. Berrocal Soto
	Egypt	Mr. Awaad
	France	Mr. Thiebaud
	Guinea-Bissau	Mr. Da Rosa
	Japan	Mr. Owada
	Kenya	Mr. Mahugu
	Poland	Mr. Wlosowicz
	Portugal	Mr. Soares
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Park
	Russian Federation	Mr. Gorelik
	Sweden	Mr. Dahlgren
	United States of America	Mr. Burleigh

Agenda

The situation in Albania

Letter dated 12 August 1997 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1997/632)

Letter dated 5 August 1997 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1997/614)

Letter dated 8 August 1997 from the Permanent Representative of Albania to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1997/628)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

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The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Albania, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Kulla (Albania) took a seat at the Council table; Mr. Molde (Denmark), Mr. Eitel (Germany), Mr. Zacharakis (Greece), Mr. Fulci (Italy), Mr. Wolzfeld (Luxembourg), Mrs. Sandru (Romania), Mr. Türk (Slovenia), Mr. Laclaustra (Spain), Mr. Čalovski (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) and Mr. Çelem (Turkey) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, if I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mrs. Sylvie Junod, head of the delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross to the United Nations.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in response to the request contained in a letter dated 5 August 1997 from the Chargé d'affaires *ad interim* of the Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, document S/1997/614, and in a letter dated 8 August 1997 from the Permanent Representative of Albania to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, document S/1997/628.

Members of the Council have before them the letter dated 12 August 1997 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council, document S/1997/632, transmitting the text of a letter dated 11 August 1997 from the Chargé d'affaires *ad interim* of the Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations.

The first speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Chile.

Mr. Somavía (Chile) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Today's meeting has been convened to consider the results of the activities of the multinational protection force for Albania, the establishment of which was authorized by the Security Council.

Responding to a request by the Governments of Albania and Italy, the Council considered the situation and determined that the crisis in that country constituted a threat to the peace and security of the region, and decided very swiftly to establish a multinational protection force.

By means of resolution 1101 (1997), adopted on 28 March, the Council authorized a number of Member States to establish a multinational protection force of a temporary and limited nature to facilitate the safe and prompt delivery of humanitarian assistance and to help create a secure environment for the missions of international organizations in Albania, including those providing humanitarian assistance.

From the outset of consultations in the Council, Chile supported the adoption of measures appropriate to the serious crisis in Albania, aware of the need to avoid

a deterioration of the situation and the spread of its effects to neighbouring countries. As resolution 1101 (1997) makes clear, the purpose of the multinational protection force was strictly humanitarian. In considering the question and adopting a resolution on it, the Council was simply shouldering its responsibilities in the humanitarian sphere.

The protection force was deployed efficiently, focusing on the most sensitive areas and responding to the challenge of making possible the delivery of humanitarian assistance in a safe and timely manner. The consolidation of the presence of the force took place within the time period and modalities that were envisioned. Without doubt, its presence produced a very positive effect on the overall security situation. In spite of certain isolated incidents, the everyday activities of the Albanian population began to develop in a normal manner from that time.

In this context, we appreciate the fact that the force provided a secure framework for civilian and humanitarian convoys, as well as protection measures for the World Health Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund and various missions from non-governmental organizations active in Albania. As is well known, this range of measures led to a qualitative improvement in the conditions for the delivery of humanitarian assistance for the Albanian population.

My delegation considers particularly valuable the fact that the force provided protection to the non-governmental organizations that requested it. We believe that providing those entities with the protection they needed was one of the basic objectives laid down in resolution 1101 (1997). Furthermore, in providing that protection we met the assumption that humanitarian workers, whether or not they are part of the United Nations system, have a right to expect the Security Council to be effective in protecting their lives and property.

With regard to procedural aspects, we note with satisfaction the fact that coordination of the protection force with the Albanian authorities developed in a flexible way, extending to the local and police authorities. For its part, the United Nations, through the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, maintained an appropriate presence as observer in the meetings of the Steering Committee of the force.

Our assessment of the work of the multinational force is clearly positive and leads us to the conclusion that the objectives of resolution 1101 (1997) were fully met.

My delegation expresses its sincere appreciation to the 11 countries that participated in the establishment of the multinational protection force, selflessly contributing to the solution of the Albanian crisis.

We are especially grateful to the Government of Italy for the active steps it took to obtain the Council's decision and for its leadership in the conduct of the force. Successful operations always have many authors. That is why it is fair at this time to underscore this great contribution by Italy to the cause of peace. It had the foresight to initiate and encourage a prompt decision. It had the logistical capacity to coordinate the operational dimensions of the force and the sense of political timeliness to enable it to both act and withdraw in a timely manner. We are grateful for that, and pleased that Ambassador Fulci is present with us; he has every reason to feel proud of his country.

Through resolution 1114 (1997), adopted on 19 June, the Council, recognizing the decisive importance of the elections planned for the end of that month, decided to extend the mandate of the protection force so that it might continue to maintain an atmosphere of security during the final stage of the electoral process. In so doing, the Council was explicitly recognizing the neutral and impartial manner in which the force was implementing its mandate. In spite of a few isolated incidents, the two rounds of these crucial elections took place successfully, in an environment free of violence and under normal conditions.

My delegation is aware of the importance of this electoral event for the future of Albania and its institutions, and for this reason we appreciate the role played by the protection force, which was the key for ensuring tranquillity in the country, especially at polling stations, and for protecting the international observers of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. The formation of a new Government before the withdrawal of the force is the clearest expression of the success of the electoral process.

It is therefore clear that the decision by the Security Council to extend the mandate of the multinational protection force was a wise one. The nature of the mission of the force is also an important precedent to be considered in the event of similar situations that might be brought to the Council's attention.

As we congratulate ourselves for the success of this operation, we must not forget the long-suffering people

of Albania. If developments turned out well it is because, in general, the people themselves contributed to the stabilization of their homeland. The protection force created the conditions that the Albanian people needed to establish their own democratic course. We must, therefore, congratulate them too for not having missed an opportunity, which so often happens in other cases that are considered by the Council. The Albanian people also have a great role to play in the manner in which we evaluate this success.

Finally, the undeniable success of this operation must not conceal the magnitude of the tasks that face the Albanian people as they start again on the course of social peace and economic recovery.

The profound causes of the Albanian crisis, as we know, have not been completely overcome. There is a need to build a broad consensus within Albanian society so that it can recover its faith in its institutions and in the rule of law.

The international community cannot be dissociated from this undertaking, which affects a country in a region where peace and stability are not always assured. The United Nations, through its agencies and relevant organs, must give assistance to the Albanian people. And the Security Council, in particular, must continue to follow closely the evolution of the situation in Albania.

Mr. Owada (Japan): At the outset, I wish to state that the delegation of Japan is pleased to see the successful completion of the mandate of the multinational protection force in Albania. Taking advantage of this felicitous occasion, I wish to offer some comments on behalf of the Government of Japan.

First of all, I wish to commend all those involved in the multinational protection force during the past four and half months. In the view of the Government of Japan, the multinational protection force has done an excellent job in facilitating the delivery of humanitarian assistance and in creating a secure environment for the activities of international organizations in Albania. It is gratifying that the task of the force has been smoothly accomplished in close cooperation with the Albanian authorities and the international organizations concerned.

During the Security Council's initial deliberation on the authorization of the force in March of this year, Japan stressed that it was important that the Security Council, in authorizing peacekeeping activities by forces not under the direct command and control of the United Nations, proceed with utmost care and prudence so as to ensure that their operations were conducted in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the Charter and strictly within the mandate authorized by the Security Council. I am happy to state that the current operations of the multinational protection force have been carried out in full accord with this basic position stated by my Government. I wish to note that this operation also constitutes an important precedent of a militarily and politically coordinated multinational action under Chapter VII of the Charter, providing a comprehensive framework to deal with a humanitarian crisis in one country, thus preventing the spillover of the crisis which might affect peace and security in the broader region.

Thanks to these efforts by the multinational protection force and by other international organizations, as well as to the constructive activities of non-governmental organizations, the humanitarian situation in Albania has improved significantly. Particularly noteworthy is the parliamentary election held in June, which was followed by the establishment of the new political leadership. Although a limited number of unfortunate incidents were observed during the electoral process, my Government is of the view that the election may be deemed as acceptable, given the prevailing circumstances. It represents a very important step forward towards restoring the political, economic and social order of Albania. The Government of Japan welcomes the formation of the new Government of Albania and hopes that the new Government, in cooperation with all the parties involved, will succeed in normalizing the situation in the country.

At this juncture, the most urgent task of the new Government, in my view, is the restoration of law and order throughout the country. The security situation in the country is as yet less than satisfactory: vast stockpiles of weapons still remain in the hands of the local population and violence by armed gangs is rampant. I should like to emphasize in this context that the restoration of law and order is also a prerequisite for attracting reconstruction assistance from the international community.

It is also incumbent upon the Government of Albania to draw up its own blueprint containing concrete economic measures for the reconstruction of the country as expeditiously as possible. The presentation of such a blueprint will, I believe, go a long way towards redeeming Albania's credibility in the eyes of the

international community. My Government urges the Government of Albania to embark on this task without delay, basing it on the advice of the relevant international bodies such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. I should particularly like to stress in this regard the importance of the reform of the financial system, in view of the recent experience in which the disturbances in Albania were ignited by the collapse of pyramid investment schemes.

Japan has been assisting the economic development of Albania since before the recent disturbances. It has also made a financial contribution to the electoral process. My Government is committed to continuing to offer appropriate assistance to Albania. It does so in the hope that the Albanian people themselves have learned from the latest unfortunate events a valuable lesson in democracy and in the market economic system. After all, it goes without saying that the primary responsibility for the normalization process in Albania lies with the Albanian people themselves. It is the conviction of Japan that they will make their best efforts to achieve durable stability and development.

I should like to conclude my statement by conveying the profound gratitude of the Government of Japan to those parties that have contributed to the success of the multinational protection force. In particular, the appreciation of my Government goes to Italy, which played the leading role in this operation, and to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and its Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, as well as to the other international organizations. It is now incumbent upon all of us in the international community to offer our cooperation to the Government and the people of Albania in their endeavour to restore stability, foster democracy and promote development in their own country, Albania.

Mr. Awaad (Egypt) (interpretation from Arabic): At the outset I would like to express the appreciation of the delegation of Egypt for the efforts that have been made by the countries participating in the multinational protection force, which is playing a significant interim role in restoring security and stability in Albania. Appreciation is particularly due to the Italy for its leadership of the force, as well as to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. We would also like to express our appreciation for the valuable periodic briefings provided by the delegation of France to the Security Council during the previous period.

When the situation began to unravel and crisis erupted in Albania, the Security Council adopted resolution 1101 (1997), which welcomed the offer of a number of countries to establish the multinational protection force to facilitate the prompt delivery of humanitarian assistance to those in need and to create a secure, appropriate environment for the work of the international organizations in Albania, including those providing humanitarian assistance.

We would also like to express our appreciation for the periodic reports that were presented by the multinational protection force during the past months. They contributed to briefing the Council on the evolution of the situation in Albania, as well as on the operations to contain the crisis which erupted at the beginning of this year. These reports have also highlighted that the multinational protection force performed the tasks assigned in accordance with Council resolutions 1101 (1997) and 1114 (1997).

The multinational protection force is an example of regional cooperation making an undoubted contribution to the enhancement of international peace and security. Over the past four months, the force has been able to restore stability and security in Albania, and it succeeded in creating a properly secure environment for the holding of elections last June — which promoted increased voter participation and made it possible to achieve results qualified as acceptable by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

But successful operations such as that of the multinational protection force can be no substitute for a United Nations role in containing crises throughout the world, particularly in Africa.

At the end of the force's mission in Albania, the international community — and especially the donor community — along with international funds and United Nations development agencies must play a greater role in enhancing long-term stability through serious, genuine and effective help in solving the economic and development problems facing the Albanian people.

Mr. Thiebaud (France) (*interpretation from French*): France has a dual interest in today's assessment of the work of the multinational protection force in Albania: as a member of the Security Council and as a State participant in the force.

We should recall the circumstances in which the force was established: Albania was in the grip of grave internal disorder and widespread violence, which threatened to plunge the country into chaos and which seriously affected the security of the population and the provision of supplies. The Albanian Government requested United Nations help in overcoming the crisis and restoring normal conditions for the functioning of the State and for the life of the population.

We can be gratified today at the prompt reaction of the United Nations and of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to that urgent appeal, and we may draw encouraging lessons from it.

Eleven countries, under the leadership of Italy, declared their readiness to send a total of up to 7,200 troops to form a multinational protection force with the mission of facilitating the prompt and safe delivery of humanitarian assistance and of helping create the secure environment needed for the missions of international organizations in Albania, to provide humanitarian assistance and to help in monitoring elections. By their actions, those European countries demonstrated their solidarity with a country that had appealed for assistance. On the ground they encountered conditions that, by definition, were not easy, and they thus agreed to take risks.

We believe that this operation is an example of crisis management in Europe and of a prompt and effective response — and European countries did indeed respond promptly and effectively here. We wish also to commend the force for having carried out its mandate with neutrality and impartiality, as it cooperated with the Albanian authorities — for that was certainly the spirit in which States participants in the force conceived their mission. The French delegation wishes finally to pay heartfelt tribute to the way in which Italy assumed the leadership of the force, enabling it completely to fulfil the task entrusted to it.

The Security Council too shouldered its responsibilities by authorizing States participating in the multinational protection force to conduct the necessary operations. It thus demonstrated once more that it wishes to respond favourably to States that voluntarily seek to contribute to the settlement of a crisis — and to do so in a transparent manner *vis-à-vis* the organ bearing responsibility for international peace and security in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. This is not the first or the last time the Council will have acted thus, by placing initiatives taken by a group of States to help overcome and resolve a crisis in the framework of respect for the competence and principles of the United Nations.

Other international organizations too made a substantial contribution in responding to Albania's request for assistance, notably the OSCE, whose presence on the ground made it possible to hold elections under acceptable conditions. My delegation pays tribute to that organization.

The international community's action in Albania over the past four months was a successful example of cooperation among States and regional and international organizations in acting promptly and in an appropriate manner to prevent a fresh crisis from worsening to the point of threatening the stability, peace and security of a whole region. Yet if all the benefits of the emergency action that has just been completed are to be realized, the stabilization of the country must be consolidated and a contribution must be made to economic and social recovery. That is the task now facing all States and relevant international organizations.

Mr. Gorelik (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): Four months ago, in response to a request from the Albanian Government and to an initiative by Italy, the Security Council authorized the dispatch of a multinational protection force to Albania. The force became the central element of the international community's response to the crisis in that country.

Today, we are pleased to note that the mandate of the multinational protection force has been fulfilled. The force deserves high commendation. It facilitated the normalization of the situation in Albania, ensured the safe delivery and distribution of humanitarian assistance, provided security for representatives of international organizations in Albania, and enabled the Albanian authorities, in cooperation with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), to prepare and conduct special parliamentary elections in a very short time-frame.

We pay tribute to the countries that participated in the force and, first and foremost, to Italy, the leader of the operation.

From the very outset, Russia advocated the operation of the force in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the principles of the OSCE, and the decisions of the Security Council. An important element

facilitating the success of the work of the force was that the mandate had been clearly written. The Security Council set up appropriate monitoring of the force's activities, *inter alia* through regular reports. Effective interaction was also established between the force and the relevant structures of the OSCE. We believe that to a significant extent this formula helped ensure the neutral and successful conduct of the operation. We think it is very important that in future too the Security Council should be kept regularly informed about developments in Albania.

The process of achieving a settlement in Albania provides another example of valuable interaction between the United Nations and regional organizations such as the OSCE on the basis of a comprehensive approach and a rational division of labour. The Albanian operation applied the principle by which regional peacekeeping forces would be answerable to the Security Council, which bears primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. The experience of the force will certainly be useful in further improving cooperation between the United Nations and its regional partners.

What has to be done in Albania today is to consolidate the gradual move of the country towards democracy, the rule of law and economic reform. We believe that a solution to these crucially important issues within the context of the process of national reconciliation will become a priority for the new leadership in Albania. In our view, the post-election statements provide prerequisites for further gradual normalization of the situation, which would be carried out primarily, of course, by the Albanians themselves.

In conclusion, the Russian Federation, within the context of the common efforts of the international community and with a leading role for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), will continue to be prepared to provide assistance in the restoration of peace and stability to Albania.

Mr. Wlosowicz (Poland): We welcome today's debate. This is the second time in a few days that the Security Council, at a formal meeting, has reflected on regional involvement in situations which pose a threat to international peace and security. Last week we discussed the regional efforts aimed at the maintenance of peace and security in the Central African Republic. Today we are marking the end of the United Nations authorization of the multinational protection force operating in Albania. As we stated in our intervention last week, the theme of the regional initiative is becoming more and more popular; this is a very welcome phenomenon. Today's debate makes us believe even more that we, the members of the international community gathered at the United Nations, should spare no effort to make regional leadership function promptly and effectively. In our view, the mechanism which has been used in relation to Albania is a positive development, and we should benefit from it.

The speed with which that country has been assisted is indeed impressive. Our delegation has a particularly clear recollection of the day Security Council resolution 1101 (1997) was adopted. At that time, Poland was presiding over the Council's work. We recall the various arguments reviewed by the members of the Council. But most of all we remember the determination with which the case was brought before the Council and with which it was pursued.

Here I wish to express my Government's gratitude to those Governments which actively contributed to setting up the operation, and in particular to the Government of Italy for the leadership it undertook. It is evident that without the willingness of States of the region, the whole operation would not have been possible. Of course, there was much at stake. And after all, there was considerable risk involved. But would we have not risked more had we not decided to act promptly? The answer to this question does not seem to be so difficult.

Unlike many others, this operation did not last long. Yet it achieved a lot. We believe that, as was stated in the final report to the Security Council on the operation,

> "The presence of the multinational protection force effectively blocked the risk of Albania sliding towards anarchy or even internal political conflict" *(S/1997/632, appendix, para. 13)*

and that it was very much due to its presence that adequate and acceptable elections were possible.

We are satisfied with the information the Security Council has received throughout the course of the operation. Thorough, objective and regular reports are of great importance in cases such as the one we are dealing with today. It must not be forgotten that the Security Council has to constantly follow the development of an authorized or approved operation to be able to react adequately at any stage.

Now, as the multinational protection force comes to an end, Albania and its people face another challenge: developing national prospects. This is a lengthy, complex and demanding task which, we trust, Albania will tackle with the utmost energy.

The withdrawal of the operation does not mean the end of external assistance to Albania. Indeed, economic and political cooperation should be intensified. We have had many examples of such cooperation so far, including, for instance, the activities of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the European Union and the Western European Union. It is hard to overestimate their value, and more cooperation will certainly be forthcoming if the Albanian people themselves prove that all international contributions are properly utilized.

In conclusion, may I again stress the importance of the role and the capacity of a "coalition of the willing": a coalition of those who well understand how important it is not to be indifferent to developments on our globe, especially when they threaten peace and security — needless to say, no matter where.

Mr. Burleigh (United States of America): On behalf of my Government, I would like to join other members of the Council, the United Nations and the international community in expressing appreciation for the role of the multinational protection force, and in particular the leadership of Italy, in Albania during the past several months.

The mission of the multinational protection force to facilitate the safe and prompt delivery of humanitarian assistance, protect international relief workers and help create a secure environment in which elections could be held has been by all accounts a success. In the wake of the tragic violence and loss of life in this recent period, we hope that Albania is at last on the road to stability, democracy, and an economy based on free-market principles.

I also wish to take this opportunity to emphasize the remarkable work of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), especially the role of the personal representative for Albania of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Mr. Franz Vranitzky, and his team. Their work was instrumental in helping to organize the holding of elections acceptable under the prevailing conditions, against tremendous odds. This was a crucial first step in creating viable institutions of democratic government in Albania. In the critical period ahead, the OSCE will remain the central coordinating body for international initiatives to assist the newly elected Government.

We also welcome the results of the second international meeting on Albania, held at Rome on 31 July, which reaffirmed the commitment of the United States and our partners in the international community to aid Albania, but which also outlined the necessary fiscal and economic steps which must be taken to put Albanian on a sound economy footing.

One of the most urgent tasks which Albania must address is the restoration of civil order and the creation of a viable security structure consistent with a democratic society. This task includes reconstruction of the Albanian armed forces and the training of a non-partisan professional police force. We applaud the decisions of countries to remain involved in assisting the Albanian military and police with bilateral training assistance following the departure of the multinational protection force. We welcome the decision of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), under its Partnership for Peace programme, to send an assessment team to Albania within the week. The recommendations of the team will be incorporated into long-term plans to rebuild Albania's security infrastructure within a democratic society.

The crisis of recent months has precipitated a period of change in Albania. Much remains to be done, however. Difficult and painful reform lies ahead if Albania is to succeed in fostering political and social reconciliation, economic development, consolidation of a fully functioning and independent judiciary and electronic media, and the creation of active civil-society institutions.

Finally, there must be a complete end to the pyramid schemes that have ravaged the country and deprived millions of their life savings. There must be an end to banditry, factionalism and the rampant proliferation of arms and disorder in the country. While the responsibility ultimately lies with the Albanian people themselves, the international community stands ready to provide assistance and support in the days ahead.

Mr. Mahugu (Kenya): My delegation is happy to participate in this debate, which marks the successful completion of the international effort to create secure conditions for the delivery of humanitarian assistance in Albania, as outlined in resolutions 1101 (1997) of 28 March 1997 and 1114 (1997) of 19 June 1997.

At the outset, my delegation would like to thank the Member States that contributed to the multinational protection force in Albania. In addition, our appreciation goes to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the European Union and other international organizations providing humanitarian assistance to the people of Albania. In this connection, my delegation would like to pay special tribute to the Government and people of Italy for the pivotal role that country played during the operation.

The importance of the force in creating a secure environment for the delivery of much-needed humanitarian assistance cannot be overemphasized. In addition to that important role, the force was instrumental in facilitating the holding of reasonably free and fair elections in Albania. Without the force's timely presence, Albania might have engaged in civil strife of untold magnitude. In this regard, my delegation welcomes the commitment by the OSCE to maintain a presence in Albania.

While appreciating the positive role that the force has played in bringing about a secure environment, my delegation would like to stress that it is only the Albanian people themselves who can bring about a lasting peace in their country. In this regard, my delegation calls upon the Albanian people, and in particular the leaders, to build on the progress made so far in order to bring about peace and prosperity in Albania. This will require a high degree of commitment and political will, and we wish them well in this endeavour. Having said that, my delegation would like to underscore the need for international assistance in the reconstruction phase as Albania strives to rebuild its economic, political and social institutions.

The deployment of the multinational protection force in Albania was done in a spirit of cooperation and singleness of purpose. It is an example of a successful regional effort, an approach that has recently gained acceptance in conflict resolution in Africa. As mentioned in the final report, the Steering Committee operated by consensus. The report states:

> "This mechanism proved to be a political asset, since all countries shared responsibility for the Committee's decisions, reinforcing cohesion and solidarity." *(S/1997/632, para. 17)*

The Security Council had earlier demonstrated the same degree of cooperation and consensus, considering the speed with which it authorized the mandate — not to mention the non-controversial manner in which that was done.

Unfortunately, authorization of such operations in other parts of the world, particularly in Africa, has not enjoyed the kind of speed and cooperation that we observed in the case of Albania. While we accept that all situations are different, it is our sincere hope that the degree of understanding that was evident in the Albanian case will be a guiding principle for such operations and will not remain a unique experience.

Mr. Lopes da Rosa (Guinea-Bissau) (*interpretation from French*): On 13 March 1997, the Security Council received a letter from the Government of Albania expressing its deep concern over its inability to ensure law and order because of the climate of violence and anarchy into which the country had been plunged, and requesting emergency consideration of the matter given the continuing deterioration in the situation.

The Security Council, aware of its responsibilities, recognized the importance of stability in the region. The Council considered this uncontrollable violence to be not only a threat to the peace in Albania but also an attack on regional stability as a whole. Accordingly, it adopted a presidential statement calling on the parties to halt the hostilities and the violence and urging them to cooperate in efforts at political dialogue with a view to easing tension and facilitating the return of peace to the country as a whole.

We welcomed this speedy reaction on the part of the Security Council. It demonstrated a desire to act quickly and jointly in order to provide solutions in a timely manner, thereby avoiding any further deterioration in hotbeds of tension or in conflict situations. It is our hope that this trend and this spirit of harmony will continue in all similar situations.

Given the continuing violence and concerned over the deterioration in the humanitarian situation, two weeks following the receipt of the letter from the Government of Albania, on 28 March 1997, the Security Council adopted resolution 1101 (1997) authorizing the establishment of a multinational protection force to facilitate prompt delivery of humanitarian assistance and to help create a secure environment for missions of international organizations in Albania. Guinea-Bissau welcomes the speed with which the decision was taken and voted in favour of the resolution, for we believe that the United Nations, and the Security Council in

particular, should become increasingly and more speedily involved at the first sign of conflict.

We would venture to hope that our Council will make good use of the clear example set by the operation in Albania, enabling it to take measures speedily where necessary in other circumstances in order to preserve international peace and security.

Guinea-Bissau would like once again to emphasize the importance of preventive diplomacy in the peaceful settlement of disputes. Here we would like to reiterate our thanks to all those who made efforts to find a negotiated solution to this crisis. We thank also the Member States that provided contingents to the force. We would like to pay a well-deserved tribute to Italy and to France, which kept the Council regularly informed of the force's activities through clear and accurate periodic reports.

Today, four months following the adoption of resolution 1101 (1997), the Security Council is assessing the force's achievements. We think that the balance sheet is a very positive one and that the force has fulfilled its mandate satisfactorily. This represents yet another success story for the United Nations. Relative calm has been restored, humanitarian assistance has reached the people it was intended for, elections were held and a democratic Government has been constituted. My delegation finds all this very encouraging.

However, much remains to be done before Albania can truly restore peace and set forth on the path towards reconciliation and economic and social rehabilitation. Primary responsibility lies, of course, with the Albanian people themselves, but undeniably the international community continues to have an essential part to play in this process so as to help the country face the serious problems confronting it. We stand convinced that the Albanians will be able to take up this new challenge with a view to ensuring rehabilitation of their country.

Mr. Park (Republic of Korea): My delegation welcomes the convening of this open debate to assess the operation of the multinational protection force in Albania.

The Republic of Korea commends and congratulates the troop- contributing countries, led by Italy, for the successful conclusion of their mandate. We also commend the various international organizations operating in Albania for the timely and effective delivery of desperately needed humanitarian assistance to the Albanian people in their time of national crisis. Our appreciation also goes to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe for its indispensable assistance to the electoral process in Albania.

The achievements of the multinational protection force go beyond the provision of a security framework for humanitarian operations. The presence of the force provided a clear symbol of the commitment of the international community to a peaceful resolution of the crisis, and thus inspired the Albanian people with the courage and the hope to rise up from chaos and rebuild their nation. The climate of security that its presence created proved conducive to the holding of fair and free elections. Beyond Albania, the multinational protection force has also contributed to the maintenance of stability in the wider Balkan region by containing a possible spillover of instability into neighbouring countries. The fact that massive, destabilizing refugee outflows did not pour into neighbouring countries may well be due to the timely deployment and the efficient operations of the force and to the confidence it restored among the Albanian people in their future.

The multinational operation in Albania highlights how a timely intervention by the international community can contain and stabilize a situation, and prevent it from deteriorating into a massive humanitarian disaster. The excellent coordination between the multinational protection force, the Albanian Government and the various international organizations operating on the ground was crucial to the success of this complex operation.

The operation in Albania was a unique multinational intervention in the sense that the situation in the country, as grave as it was, was one of internal unrest sparked by financial crisis, not the usual kind of armed conflict between opposing sides which the Security Council most often deals with. We believe that the Albanian operation has set a significant precedent for potential future interventions by the international community in cases where a State is gripped by a complex crisis with serious humanitarian implications and political repercussions for its neighbours.

For the long-term stability and reconstruction of the country, it is important to address the underlying causes of the instability. Rebuilding the country's democratic institutions on the basis of the recent parliamentary elections is a vital first step in that direction. This hard-won stability will become irreversible if it can be backed by economic rehabilitation and development.

Now that the multinational protection force has successfully completed its mission, it must be emphasized that the future of Albania lies in the hands of the Government and the people of Albania themselves. The international community can meaningfully help only when the Albanian Government and people are willing to help themselves. We take some encouragement from Prime Minister Nano's recent statement that

> "the best times for every Albanian, and for the nation, lie in the future, not in the past."

Korea offers its best wishes to the Albanian people and Government as they embark upon the vital task of rebuilding national unity and democratic institutions and reinvigorating social and economic development.

Mr. Dahlgren (Sweden): The representative of Luxembourg will speak later on behalf of the European Union. Sweden fully associates itself with that statement.

In the last six months, Albania and its people have indeed experienced a difficult and uncertain time. The international community played an important supporting role in overcoming chaos and the risk of civil war, but the key to resolving the situation always remained with Albania itself. For the future, it is equally true that the responsibility for achieving constructive development and reform remains firmly with the people, the Government and all the political forces of Albania.

The case of Albania emphasizes the need for the international community to be vigilant about early warning signals of potential conflict and unrest. Decreasing faith in political institutions, in combination with economic and social hardship, provides fertile ground for civil unrest. The multinational protection force constituted a last-minute response to a grave situation.

When assisting Albania to create a stable society and to prevent similar crises in the future, the original causes for the unrest should be borne in mind. If international support is to yield lasting results, Albania needs reconciliation not only in the political arena, but also in the building of democratic institutions. Popular confidence in the impartiality of the public administration is a prerequisite for the return to normalcy. This development will require international contributions of know-how and experience.

The successful holding of elections in the most challenging of circumstances should be credited not least to the efforts of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and its Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. We welcome the crucial role played by the multinational protection force in providing a secure environment, as well as logistical support, in that election process. Of equal importance was that the force created the conditions necessary for international organizations to provide humanitarian assistance in Albania. For this we extend our appreciation to the troop-contributing countries, in particular Italy, which took the lead in this important mission. Sweden also welcomes Mr. Vranitzky's efforts so far and his stated willingness to head an OSCE mission designed to coordinate the efforts in the stabilization and reconstruction phase of Albania's recovery.

Although working conditions have not been ideal, the Western European Union, through its Multinational Advisory Police Element, is making a significant contribution, helping Albania to build a democratically-controlled and capable police force, which will be needed to guarantee internal security in the future.

The security situation in Albania still gives rise to concern. The positive results achieved so far cannot be allowed to be reversed. As the protection force has been scaled down there have been numerous reports on the dangers of a possible security vacuum. Common criminals as well as more organized gangs have increased their activities anew. There is certainly a need to continue to monitor this development closely.

Further efforts by the international community will be needed following the withdrawal of the multinational force. If a security-related presence is deemed necessary, the form of such a venture should of course be considered carefully. The current North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) plan to study the prospects for the reconstruction of the national army in the framework of Partnership for Peace cooperation is welcome.

Considering the difficult situation in Albania a few months ago, achievements have been remarkable. The international community is ready to support Albania in consolidating stability, democracy and prosperity. What is asked of Albania is that, in cooperation with the international community, it use the resources made available to achieve positive and sustainable results in the fields of security, democratic consolidation and economic reconstruction.

Mr. Soares (Portugal): At the outset I would like to state that we associate ourselves fully with the statement that will be delivered in a few moments on behalf of the European Union by the representative of Luxembourg.

Portugal, from the very beginning, actively supported the efforts of the international community to provide assistance to Albania after its descent into chaos and turmoil. In this regard, we would like to join others in praising the special efforts of Italy as the driving force behind the establishment of the multinational protection force in Albania, to which Portugal has contributed logistical support in the form of air transportation. The presence of the force permitted the delivery of international humanitarian assistance to the Albanians and stabilized the political situation in the country, allowing the holding of elections. In fact, the deployment of the multinational protection force almost certainly averted a full-scale civil war, the consequences of which would have been disastrous, not only for the Albanians themselves but for the already volatile situation in that region of Europe.

The combined efforts in Albania of the United Nations, the European Union, the Western European Union, the Council of Europe, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and international economic institutions and relief agencies, all under the effective coordination of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), are a good example of a regional response to a crisis by the international community. The United Nations Charter refers specifically to the utilization of regional arrangements under the authority of the Security Council, and the response to the crisis in Albania was carried out in strict accordance with these terms.

Now, as the multinational protection force has withdrawn from Albania, it is time to move forward. Naturally, the international community will continue to assist the Albanian people, but it is the Albanian Government that is principally responsible for the reestablishment of law and order and for pursuing national reconciliation and economic reconstruction in Albania, as well as for continuing the process of democratization and the protection of human rights. We urge the Albanian authorities to respond positively to the efforts of the international community and to cooperate fully with it in the fulfilment of these important objectives.

Mr. Berrocal Soto (Costa Rica) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation, with those of other members of the Security Council, is very pleased to welcome the successful conclusion of the work of the multinational protection force in Albania. The presence of that force, which was aimed at providing the necessary security measures for the delivery of humanitarian aid in close cooperation with the agencies of the United Nations and non-governmental organizations, was of great importance for the settlement of the crisis in Albania.

In particular, my delegation wishes to congratulate the Government of the Republic of Italy, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the European Union for their generous and prompt assistance to the people of Albania. We also wish to emphasize the great degree of cooperation and coordination of the Republic of Italy, the OSCE and the European Union with the Security Council, which acted, upon their request, in accordance with the circumstances.

My delegation wishes to express its satisfaction at the presidential statement to be made today. The case of Albania is a very clear example of the new theoretical and practical vision of the concept of international peace and security that the Security Council has been applying. In Albania, the multinational protection force not only helped to check the armed attacks and the anarchy, but helped to restore the basic social fabric, and it is now putting the future of Albania back into the hands of the Albanians themselves, as should be the case. The presidential statement wisely points out that from now on it will be up to the Albanians to restore normal conditions to their country, with the assistance and cooperation of the international community.

The successful conclusion of the work of the force in Albania also shows how positive responsible international intervention can be when it is conducted under the auspices of the United Nations. It is important to stress that this intervention, which did no more than was necessary, was conducted with strict respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Albania, with a purpose primarily humanitarian in nature.

In this context, for example, we were very pleased that, thanks to the technical support provided by the force to humanitarian operations, it was possible to vaccinate 350,000 children against polio, chlorinate water and distribute teaching materials. The force made it possible, in a relatively short period of time, to re-open schools, relaunch commercial activity and give direction to social and political life in general.

We want to emphasize especially that, thanks to the work of the multinational protection force, it was possible

to guarantee a secure environment during the electoral period. In this respect, we commend the force for its timely intervention in certain serious incidents, thereby allowing greater impartiality in the electoral process, facilitating broad participation by the voters and avoiding the violation by political forces of the electoral will of the Albanian people. In this context it is worth mentioning in particular that the work of the force facilitated the presence and safety of observers at all stages of the electoral process.

My delegation is therefore pleased to note that the parliamentary representatives of the European Union were able to conclude that the elections were satisfactory and can serve as the basis for a pluralist and free democratic system. In this respect, we are delighted at reports that the new Government has begun its constitutional activities.

It is now up to the Albanian people and their institutions to continue to build their future. It is particularly essential that the new Government, in an atmosphere of freedom and respect for human rights, make special efforts to ensure the security of the entire country and achieve full reconciliation among its inhabitants. A great deal remains to be done. The path of democratic institutionality is complex and difficult. The international community cannot stand aside; it must maintain its support and its cooperation for the full reconstruction of Albania. We are sure that this will be the case.

In reiterating our appreciation to the Governments that contributed troops, and in particular to the Italian authorities who promoted and coordinated this important effort by the international community in Albania, my delegation is pleased to express its firm support for the presidential statement that you, Mr. President, will be making today on behalf of the Security Council.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of the United Kingdom.

The fact that the immediate crisis in Albania has now ended is largely due to the key roles played by the multinational protection force and by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Prompt and effective action by the multinational protection force under the leadership of the Italian Government helped ensure that humanitarian aid could be delivered and that other international organizations could operate in conditions of safety. The OSCE's involvement was crucial not only in ensuring that elections could be held, but also in coordinating international assistance to Albania in general. I would like to join others here in paying a warm tribute to all those who contributed to such action, and in particular to the Italian Government for its effective leadership of the multinational protection force.

Elections may have been held, but Albania still faces some tough challenges. The primary responsibility for meeting those challenges rests with the Albanian people and their Government. We welcome the commitment that the new Government has made to promote reconciliation, restore law and order and carry out economic reform. We look to all sections of Albanian society to put aside their past differences and to work together for that purpose. The United Kingdom, together with other members of the international community, is ready to provide much-needed support and assistance. But international assistance will crucially depend upon the willingness of the Albanian Government itself to tackle the country's problems, to ensure respect for the rule of law and for human rights and to promote the conditions necessary to allow economic recovery.

I resume my function as President of the Council. The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Albania, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Kulla (Albania): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, for the way in which you are conducting the work of the Security Council and to thank you for including in the agenda of the Council this open debate on the occasion of the termination of the mandate of the multinational protection force in Albania.

As is already known, during the first months of this year Albania was caught in the middle of a general crisis which had economic, political and institutional dimensions. As a consequence of this crisis my country went through a period in which there was a total lack of law and order, which brought with it the looting of military armouries and the dispersal of the weapons to the population. More than 1,500 people lost their lives in this chaotic situation, while many private and public properties were completely destroyed.

The Security Council, through a presidential statement on 13 March 1997, expressed its concern for the eruption of the crisis in Albania, and two weeks later, through resolution 1101 (1997), authorized the deployment of a multinational protection force in Albania in order to ensure the distribution of humanitarian assistance and the establishment of a safe environment for the activity of international organizations, initially for a

period of three months. Through resolution 1114 (1997) the mandate of the multinational protection force was extended for another 45 days.

The Albanian Government expresses its deepest gratitude to the Security Council for the swift reaction and for the special attention it attached to the crisis in Albania. The authorization for an immediate deployment of the force in Albania prevented a further aggravation of the situation and increased people's confidence. This was an excellent example in the history of the operations authorized by the Security Council to protect international peace and security.

The Albanian Government expresses its special gratitude to the Secretary-General for his personal involvement and his continuous attention to this issue and for the regular briefings to the Security Council.

From 28 March to 14 August 1997, the Security Council, led by the ambassadors of Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation and the United Kingdom, discussed 11 periodical reports on the activity of the multinational protection force in Albania. In this context I thank them all, and I would like to commend also Ambassador Dejammet of France for his excellent work and his competent and skilful introductions to the reports to the Security Council. And outside of the Council, my appreciation goes at the same time to Ambassador Fulci of Italy, for his great support and successful work on this important matter.

The operation of the multinational protection force in Albania, known as Operation Alba, successfully completed its mission. This force came to Albania on 15 April. It was composed of personnel from 11 Member States and had a total of 7,215 troops. In close cooperation with the Albanian Government, the force fulfilled its mission in a neutral and impartial way by fully respecting its mandate, defined in the above-mentioned resolutions of the Security Council.

This force had to overcome many difficulties in an unknown terrain, with weapons spread out everywhere, and at a time when a Government of National Reconciliation had just been formed as a result of the compromise that was achieved among the Albanian political parties in March this year.

The Albanian people and the Albanian Government express their profound thanks to the countries members of the force. Our thanks go to Italy for its excellent direction of the force, and to Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Greece, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain and Turkey, as well as to every single commander and soldier deployed in Albania. These troops were courageously determined to create the safe zones for the distribution of humanitarian aid and for the activity of the international organizations, governmental or non-governmental, and to increase the confidence necessary for the activity of the Albanian police and army, thus easing the work of the Government of National Reconciliation. The force created a positive atmosphere of confidence and safety for Albanians and observer missions of international organizations during the Albanian parliamentary elections of 29 June 1997.

The Albanian people have correctly understood the role and importance of this force. They supported it and showed their hospitality. At a time when there have been many Albanian casualties, no soldier of this force has been attacked or has perished during the force's time in Albania. This fact does not mean that the operation was not dangerous or difficult. It proves that this endeavour was successful and effective. At the same time it shows the appreciation and solidarity of Albanians as regards this force.

The Albanian Government hails, and express its gratitude to, the regional international organizations — such as Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), European Union (EU), the Council of Europe (CE) and the Western European Union (WEU) — for their readiness and assistance during the emergency stage of the Albanian crisis, and to other humanitarian organizations, governmental and non-governmental, that guaranteed the delivery of the humanitarian aid to Albania. This testifies to how successful the United Nations could be in dealing with the humanitarian crisis.

On 29 June of this year, parliamentary elections were held in Albania, resulting in the forming of a new coalition Government, on a broader basis of political representation. The main priorities of this Government are the quick re-establishment of public order and the economic recovery of the country.

We believe that public order and security will be assured within a short time, and Albania will enter the path of normal and solid development. At the same time, we are fully confident that the support of the international community and the efforts of our country for reconstruction will continue.

We hope that the donors conference, expected to be held soon in Italy, following the meeting in Rome of 31 July this year, will reach concrete results regarding rapid progress and development in Albania.

The President: I thank the representative of Albania for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Italy. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Fulci (Italy): First of all let me say that Italy fully endorses the statement that will be made by the distinguished Permanent Representative of Luxembourg, Ambassador Jean-Louis Wolzfeld, on behalf of the European Union and associated countries.

On 11 August, the commander of the multinational protection force, General Forlani, left Albanian soil, completing the withdrawal of the contingents of the 11 countries which participated in Operation Alba. A total of 7,215 men were deployed, more than half of them Italian. They carried out 1,698 missions. Under the force's protection, 5,168 tons of food and 339 tons of medicine were distributed.

The multinational protection force — authorized by Security Council resolutions 1101 (1997) and 1114 (1997) — closely cooperated with the Albanian authorities, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and other major international organizations, including the United Nations and its related agencies, to find a peaceful solution to the crisis. The force facilitated the safe and prompt delivery of humanitarian assistance and helped create a secure environment for the missions of international organizations.

Moreover, the multinational protection force provided the security framework needed for the Albanian elections; this was made possible through the relentless shuttle diplomacy of President Vranitzky, the special envoy of the Danish Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE. This deserves mention because I think it was a major element in the success. The process was monitored by the OSCE, and culminated in the election of a new Parliament and the formation of a new Government. The elections were a crucial step on the road to the stability and national reconciliation of the country; they strengthened democratization and gave confidence back to Albanians.

In retrospect, this positive outcome stemmed from two key elements: the determination of a group of countries — the "coalition of the willing" — to act swiftly to restore a situation of normalcy in Albania, even at the risk of the lives of their troops; and the equally swift deliberations of the Security Council, in the presence of Secretary-General Kofi Annan — who, representatives may remember, went twice to Albania to instill urgency and who gave the Italian authorities invaluable advice on the conduct of the operation during his visit to Rome.

We cannot forget that when the decision was made to start the operation, the Government was losing control over the territory, with the country sliding towards anarchy. The economic situation had plummeted with the collapse of the so-called pyramid schemes, which devastated the savings of thousands of families. A humanitarian emergency was encroaching by the day. Arms depots were looted, and the civilian population came to be heavily armed. Common crime was rampant, and more so after the collapse of the prison system. There was imminent risk of a spillover of the crisis to neighbouring countries.

Thanks to the decisiveness and rapidity of the international community's action, the situation was contained and has been reversed, and 3.5 million Albanians are now back on the road towards normality, internal security and, hopefully, economic and social rehabilitation. I dare say that if the international community had acted with the same speed and determination in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in the Great Lakes region, thousands of lives would probably have been spared and immense suffering and destruction prevented.

In our opinion, several factors contributed to the positive outcome of the Albanian operation. Some of them were innovative and could prove useful in the planning and conduct of similar activities in the future.

First was the unity of intent shown by a group of countries to get involved immediately in a risky but necessary operation.

Secondly, there was decisive action by the Security Council, which on 28 March 1997 approved the mandate for the force in one day, within 12 hours of the Albanian authorities' request. I believe that that is a record for this body.

The third factor was the rapid planning and deployment of the multinational protection force. I am proud to say that it took the Italian general staff only four days from the adoption of the resolution to submit the operational guidelines to other participating countries, while at the same time an advance mission landed in Albania. Two weeks later the first contingents of the multinational protection force were deployed in the field.

Fourthly, there was intense and in-depth political consultation and coordination among the participating countries, giving the force the necessary guidance from the outset. A steering committee was established, and it met weekly in Rome under the chairmanship of Ambassador Amedeo de Franchis. It consisted of the political directors of the 11 troop-contributing countries and the commander of the force. Representatives of the United Nations and its related agencies, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the European Union, the Council of Europe, the Western European Union and the International Committee of the Red Cross all attended as observers. Thus, all the contributing countries and the international organizations involved could interact and make common decisions in real time, always based on consensus — and I underline this point, which I think is very important. The steering committee also prepared the 11 bi-weekly reports mandated by the Security Council, thus providing prompt and thorough information concerning the activities of the force.

Fifthly, definite limits were placed on the time-frame of the operation from the outset, with a sunset clause that was fully respected.

The sixth factor was the comprehensive and ongoing integration of the political, military and humanitarian aspects of the entire operation.

Last but not least was the total, absolute respect by the force for its mandate regarding complete neutrality and impartiality towards the Albanian political forces, and regarding refraining from any kind of police activities, no matter how difficult this proved at times.

In short, on this occasion there was strict compliance with the three golden rules of the updated peacekeeping doctrine: request and consent of the legitimate Government; absolute impartiality of the peacekeepers; and no recourse to weapons by peacekeepers except in self-defence. Consequently, as our colleague from Guinea-Bissau has already noted, Albania can be considered another United Nations success story, like Mozambique, Cambodia, El Salvador and Haiti.

From this point forward, Albania is entering a second, no less difficult, phase: it must address long-term national reconciliation, the rehabilitation of State institutions, economic reform, and reconstruction. Nobody can deny that the primary responsibility for Albania's future lies with the Albanian people and the Albanian authorities. But their efforts will be to no avail if the international community falls short in offering badly-needed assistance during this new phase. We seem to be off to a good start. The major multilateral and bilateral donors are working together effectively to help the Albanians stabilize the economy, creating the conditions for sound, sustainable growth.

But economic growth alone will not bring about stability and progress: the country's administration and democratic institutions must also be strengthened, as we have learned from recent events. Special consideration should also be given to the most vulnerable segments of the Albanian population, in particular the children, who are the future of the country — who are the future of all our countries — and for whom appropriate assistance programmes must be urgently adopted.

Italy pledges to continue to extend a helping hand to support the rehabilitation of its Adriatic neighbour. On the multilateral level, we will act within the framework of the international organizations already involved, the international financial institutions, and the many non-governmental organizations which have already begun to help Albania meet its challenges: let us not forget the non-governmental organizations, which always play such an important role in such situations. On the bilateral level, the Italian Government has established an ad hoc committee, composed of the relevant administrations involved in assistance to Albania and chaired by Commissioner Angioni, to coordinate all bilateral initiatives aimed at the social and economic recovery of the country, giving priority to public education, the health and judicial systems, the promotion of trade, and the fostering of small to medium-size businesses.

To that end, as has been recalled in previous statements, in May and July we convened two preparatory conferences in Rome, chaired personally by our Foreign Minister, Mr. Dini, in which international financial institutions, the main donors, and all the other international organizations involved took part. These conferences will be followed by a ministerial meeting in

Rome this coming fall, and later by a donors' conference in Brussels. We are confident that, with the support of the international community, Albania will show the necessary determination to be fully reintegrated into the European family, to which it belongs by geography, history and culture.

I wish to reiterate my country's sincere gratitude to the 10 other States and Governments that cooperated so effectively for the positive outcome of this operation, and express our profound, sincere appreciation to the Council Presidents, who fully grasped the urgency of the situation at critical moments: Ambassador Wlosowicz of Poland; Ambassador Monteiro of Portugal; Ambassador Park of the Republic of Korea; Ambassador Lavrov of the Russian Federation; Ambassador Osvald of Sweden; and of course you, Mr. President.

My thanks also go to all the other members of the Security Council for their earnest commitment in authorizing and monitoring the operation, particularly Ambassador Dejammet of France, whose country was one of the major contributors to the force and whose delegation played such an essential role in the Council's deliberations and in keeping the Council informed. And, of course, my sincere congratulations go to our colleague Ambassador Kulla of Albania, who, throughout these trying times for his country, always followed the process here in New York with calm, expertise and diplomatic skill.

However, our work here would produce few or no results were it not for the bravery and dedication of the officers and soldiers who risk their lives daily in the field of peacekeeping activities. Through them, these officers and soldiers, the ideals of peace and solidarity of the Charter become a reality for millions of people throughout the world. We owe them all a lasting debt of gratitude.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Turkey. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Çelem (Turkey): Albania and its friendly people have passed through very difficult times. These difficulties were, to a great extent, the result of a painful process of adaptation to a new political, social and economic order. Peace, security and stability on the Balkan peninsula, of which Turkey is a part, has become all the more critical in view of the long ordeal of the breakup of Yugoslavia. We viewed the crisis in Albania against that background. We were convinced that ensuring internal peace and stability in Albania was a prerequisite for the preservation of peace and stability in the region. As a matter of fact, our contingent in the multinational protection force was only a reflection of Turkey's continuing interest in and commitment to regional stability and international peacekeeping efforts.

As will be recalled, the initiative for finding an effective solution to the problem emanated from the political will of the Albanian leadership. It was the Albanian Government which asked for the assistance of the international community, and Member States and friends and neighbours of Albania felt duty-bound to provide that country with the necessary and firm support that enabled it to move forward rapidly on the road to peace and stability.

This support was given through the multinational protection force, within the legal framework drawn up in resolutions 1101 (1997) and 1114 (1997). In this respect, Italy deserves the appreciation of the world community for the leadership role it has undertaken in this act of international solidarity. Turkey was among the sponsors of both of those resolutions. Those resolutions provided the framework for an operation limited in purpose and duration, but capable of meeting the requirements of the mission. The operation itself acquired an ad hoc character of its own. It was not a United Nations peacekeeping effort in its classic meaning.

It is possible that, in the future, such a method could be contemplated and employed with respect to other contingencies. As a matter of fact, the arrangement foreseen in resolution 1125 (1997) for the Central African Republic could be considered another example of a new form of peacekeeping operation. The peacekeeping effort in Bosnia has also turned into a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) peacekeeping operation with similar features. We believe that the advantages and disadvantages of such undertakings are worth closer examination.

In any case, the operation in Albania was successful. It enjoyed the full cooperation of the Albanian authorities and particularly of the Albanian people. The Turkish contingent fulfilled its task in a friendly and cooperative atmosphere. Planning and coordination among the troop-contributing States secured a smooth operation. It was thus possible for the Albanian people to hold the parliamentary elections that paved the way for the resolution of the crisis. My Government welcomed the elections as a first step in providing the basis for the

lasting solution of Albania's problems through democratic means.

The multinational protection force was only one part of a large scale international effort to help bring about peace and stability to Albania and to assist it in resuming its progress on the road to full political, economic and social recovery. The contributions of other international organizations should also be mentioned, especially the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) which, by providing the coordinating framework for international assistance to Albania, has been instrumental in the joint efforts for the containment and elimination of the crisis. But the real work begins now. Continued international support is necessary for lasting stability and development in Albania.

The operation has effectively contributed to the fulfilment of one of the main purposes enshrined in the Charter of this Organization, the maintenance of peace and security; it has also contributed to the stability of one Member country, Albania. Now is the time for the fulfilment of another main purpose: to achieve international cooperation in solving Albania's economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems.

My Government will, as always, continue to support Albania, with which we share close historical and cultural bonds, both through bilateral arrangements, and by assuming its part of the responsibilities in collective efforts in international forums.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Luxembourg. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Wolzfeld (Luxembourg) (*interpretation from French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Cyprus have aligned themselves with this statement. Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway also associate themselves with this statement.

The multinational protection force in Albania has just come to the end of its mandate. This past March, the Albanian Government asked the international community for assistance in support of its efforts to overcome the chaos and anarchy into which the country had been plunged. The international community reacted speedily, and on 28 March the Security Council adopted resolution 1101 (1997) authorizing a multinational protection force to facilitate the safe and prompt delivery of humanitarian assistance in Albania and to help create a secure environment for the missions of the international organizations.

On 19 June the Security Council extended the force's mandate to ensure, by means of an international presence, *inter alia*, the stability required to enable the electoral process to take place in a calm and secure environment.

The European Union wishes to express its appreciation to the troop-contributing countries, among which were eight contingents from the European Union member States, and in particular to the Italian Government, which played a key role in setting up and steering the multinational force.

The international community's action in Albania would not have been possible without the action of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The European Union extends its warmest thanks to Mr. Vranitzky, the personal representative of the President-in-office of the OSCE, for his tireless work on the ground and in the international organizations to ensure that elections could be held under acceptable conditions.

The various international organizations, among them the Western European Union and the Council of Europe, which worked together within the framework co. inated by the OSCE, have done a remarkable job, avoiding pointless duplication and delivering effective assistance to the Albanian people in the most trying of times.

Between 1991 and 1996, the European Union has given considerable assistance to Albania, amounting to 450 million ECU, especially in the field of humanitarian assistance and technical cooperation. Since the start of the crisis, the European Union has played to the full the role incumbent on it in restoring political stability and security in Albania. Working alongside the other organizations cooperating within the OSCE framework, it has played an active part in efforts to establish democracy and protect human rights, including the rights of people belonging to minority groups, as well as in preparing and monitoring the elections.

The European Union has stated on several occasions its determination to help Albania regain political stability and restore security. However, it emphasizes that it is first and foremost for the Albanian authorities to

determine appropriate responses to the challenges of restoring stability and security and bringing about national reconciliation, as well as promoting democratic institutions and ensuring the country's economic recovery. In this context, the European Union welcomes the recent success of the Albanian security forces in Vlore in collecting illegally held weapons and confronting armed gangs.

Above all, law and order must be restored; human rights, including the rights of people belonging to minority groups, must be respected; and democratic rules must be applied. The setting up of Parliament and the rapid formation of a Government based on the election results were a fundamental stage in this process.

The European Union considers that with the withdrawal of the multinational protection force the emergency has come to an end, and that it is now time to embark on the process of stabilization and return to normal conditions. The international community will support the efforts of the Albanian Government in rehabilitating State institutions, consolidating democratic life in Albania and rebuilding its economic and financial system.

For the period 1996-1999, the European Union has already budgeted assistance totalling up to 212 million ECU. Once the new governmental and administrative structures are established, this aid will be reviewed in the light of the situation on the ground.

At the Conference of Senior Officials on Albania, held in Rome on 31 July 1997 under the chairmanship of Italy's Minister for Foreign Affairs, the participants called for the establishment of constructive working relations between the new Government and the opposition in a true spirit of national reconciliation. The European Union will closely watch the commitments given by the Albanian Government on this matter. The international community, and the European Union in particular, announced that international aid would be tied to political and economic conditions, which would determine the operational measures to be carried out within the reform process.

The European Union has prepared a draft international agenda for Albania, which will be presented in its final form at a ministerial meeting on Albania, to take place in Rome in the autumn. The aim of the meeting will be to lay the foundations for future institutional and economic assistance. In addition, a donors' conference will be convened in Brussels by the European Commission in cooperation with the World Bank, once the Albanian Government and the International Monetary Fund have agreed on a programme of economic reform.

Finally, the European Union welcomes the decision by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to examine the possibility of setting up a programme to rebuild the Albanian army in the framework of the Partnership for Peace.

The Albanian people have lived through a painful and particularly difficult time over the last few months. The European Union and the international community have lent their political, humanitarian and economic support to overcome the crisis. The multinational protection force has played a major role in this undertaking. The European Union wishes to express its gratitude to all the men and women who took part in this endeavour. It is now for the Albanian people and their newly elected Government to initiate comprehensive political and economic reforms within the framework of human rights and the principles of democracy. In taking up this challenge, Albania can count on the European Union's continued support.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Slovenia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Türk (Slovenia): We sincerely appreciate the scheduling of this open discussion, which enables the Security Council to evaluate the achievements of the important multinational operation in Albania and to focus on the tasks that remain after its completion.

Slovenia fully endorses the statement just made by the representative of Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union, with which it aligned itself. We would like to add the following points.

In recent months, Albania has gone through an extremely difficult period. The events leading to the collapse of State institutions and public order are well known. The resulting phenomenon of social disintegration had the potential seriously and negatively to affect the already precarious security situation in the immediate neighbourhood. The gravity of these circumstances demanded quick and meaningful action.

The States of the region and others proved their capability effectively to cooperate in dealing with this situation. Soon after the appeal by the Albanian authorities for assistance, the multinational protection

force was assembled under the leadership of Italy and deployed in the country. It has been very encouraging to see that a rapid and effective response is possible. We pay tribute to Italy for the initiative and for the effective leadership of the operation, and to the Government of Albania for its cooperation, which substantially contributed to fulfilment of the mandate. Moreover, this operation represents an example of successful cooperation between the United Nations and the relevant regional arrangements, as well as an example of timely and adequate preventive action.

The role of the multinational protection force in Albania was indispensable. The force was instrumental in creating the conditions for the restoration of stability and the return to normalcy. In addition to its primary task of protecting humanitarian assistance, the multinational protection force provided a secure environment for holding the elections. The conduct of elections and their results were certified as acceptable by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and by the Council of Europe. As such, these elections represented a crucial step towards the rebuilding of a democratic order in Albania.

The successful election process, however, is just the beginning. The challenges facing the new Albanian Government are enormous. Political reconciliation, the consolidation of democracy, and institutional and economic reforms will all require a secure and stable environment. The restoration of public order throughout the country is a daunting task in the light of continuing lawlessness and the presence of armed gangs in some quarters. It is necessary to be aware that the situation continues to be fraught with dangers that could jeopardize the progress achieved so far. Therefore, the international community has to continue to be engaged in Albania and to assist in its progress.

Slovenia participated in the multinational protection force and stands ready to provide further assistance, through appropriate multilateral mechanisms or bilaterally. Development and humanitarian assistance will be of special importance in the coming phase of the reconstruction of Albania. Slovenia has recently dispatched humanitarian assistance to Albania, including medicines. We are also willing to contribute to the efforts to train and develop security forces, especially personnel designated to deal with organized crime.

We welcome the consideration of the possible role that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) could play in the process of stabilization. Through its membership in the Partnership for Peace, Slovenia is ready to support such a role.

Finally, Slovenia welcomes the readiness of the World Bank to assist in the implementation of a quick-impact programme for economic recovery and the preparedness of donor countries to convene a conference on assistance to Albania as soon as an agreement has been reached between the Albanian Government and the International Monetary Fund on an economic reform programme.

Stability and security in the region of southeastern Europe remains a preoccupation of the international community. The involvement of appropriate international institutions in Albania continues to be of great importance. Slovenia is willing to contribute its share. In this context, we welcome in particular the scheduling of the ministerial conference on Albania to be held this autumn in Rome.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Denmark. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Molde (Denmark): On behalf of the Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), I would like to express my satisfaction that the Security Council has decided to convene this formal meeting on the situation in Albania. It provides a timely opportunity to sum up the main points of the OSCE's involvement in resolving the crisis in Albania and to consider the parameters for future international assistance to Albania.

With the acceptable and adequate parliamentary elections held on 29 June and 6 July this year, respectively, and with the subsequent formation of a new Government in Albania, the OSCE has achieved the main objectives of its mandate in Albania, these being to offer its good offices in order to reestablish contacts between political parties in Albania, particularly with regard to the adoption of an election law acceptable to all parties; and to pave the way for acceptable elections under difficult conditions at the end of June, thus reopening the door for the international community to assist Albania in rebuilding the country. The results were made possible by the quick response of the international community, including the Security Council.

With the new Government in place, a new beginning for Albania has started. The responsibility for shaping the

future lies primarily in the hands of the Albanians themselves. The international community must, however, be ready to continue to assist Albania in this process. An agreement on the conditions for international assistance must be found.

The OSCE will be prepared to continue to support Albania. Based on the OSCE's decisions in March and the recent experiences with the international efforts in Albania, and building on the conclusions of the conference held in Rome on 31 July this year, the OSCE is prepared to take up this challenge in two ways: first of all, to continue to provide the coordinating framework for international efforts in Albania, within which international organizations can play their full part in their respective areas; and secondly, to provide, in cooperation with other international organizations, advice and assistance within the OSCE's field of experience.

The focus of the OSCE's own efforts is now on post-election assistance as it relates to the consolidation and development of democracy and democratic values and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights is to this end actively engaged in the development of concrete programmes directed towards this essential post-election assistance.

Close coordination with other international organizations active in this field is paramount in order not to duplicate efforts and to ensure complementarity. The OSCE will work closely with the Council of Europe, the European Union, non-governmental organizations and others. The experience thus far has been positive.

The working group on Albania chaired by Mr. Vranitzky will continue to convene in order to secure a comprehensive international approach towards Albania. The economic aid package coordinated among the International Monetary Fund, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the World Bank and the Commission of the European Union, as well as bilateral agreements, must be accompanied by political reform and progress in the process of national reconciliation.

The presence of the multinational protection force made international efforts possible. Without this force the parliamentary elections would not have been conducted as well as they were. In this connection, the Chairman-in-Office would like to express his gratitude to the Security Council for the quick adoption of resolution 1101 (1997), which mandated the deployment of the multinational protection force, and for the ensuing prolongation of the mandate on 19 June.

The multinational protection force left Albania earlier this week. Continued international presence is contingent on a satisfactory security situation. The Chairman-in-Office therefore welcomes the Albanian Government's newly-adopted plan for the reinstallment of order in Albania and encourages the Albanian Government to continue the positive dialogue with the international community on security questions.

To conclude, the lessons learned from the Albanian crisis are twofold: first, an immediate and decisive reaction by the international community can go far in preventing further destabilization; secondly, a comprehensive approach to the problem is needed.

The issues of economic recovery, political reform and security are all interlinked. Therefore, the international effort must combine these elements. These are lessons for the international community when dealing with other crises. The OSCE stands ready to continue to play its part and encourages all the other international organizations and countries involved in Albania to do the same.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Greece. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Zacharakis (Greece): My delegation fully subscribes to the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union. Greece attaches particular importance to its relations with neighbouring Albania, with which it is linked by strong ties of friendship and cooperation.

In the last few years, following the political changes in that country, Greece has contributed significantly to the efforts of the Albanian people to promote political, economic and social progress. The Greek people extended warm hospitality to hundreds of thousands of Albanians coming to Greece to work to ensure a better future for themselves and their families. At the same time the two countries have set up a solid framework for the development of their relations in all fields, based on the principles of good neighbourliness.

Despite some occasional setbacks in the past, Greek-Albanian relations have managed to overcome long-standing difficulties and to establish a climate of mutual

confidence and understanding. In the period from 1991 to 1996, Greece offered considerable economic, technical and humanitarian assistance to Albania. Since the last crisis broke out in February, Greece again has spared no effort to contribute, both bilaterally and multilaterally, to its peaceful settlement.

Greece participated by contributing a regiment to the multinational protection force. It contributed several officials and experts to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) presence in Albania and provided significant humanitarian assistance, while accepting into Greek hospitals large numbers of Albanian citizens in need of treatment. The Greek Government undertook various initiatives at both the bilateral and the international levels so as to help in bringing together the parties in Albania, to achieve a negotiated solution of the existing problems and to create the conditions for holding free and fair elections.

In this context, I would like to remind members of the successful visit of the then Prime Minister Fino to Athens on 2 and 3 April, and of the talks he had there with Foreign Minister Pangalos, Mr. Van Mierlo, then President of the Council of the Ministers of the European Union, and Mr. Vranitzky, the special representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office. These talks helped in reaching an understanding among all the parties concerned on the structure of the international presence in Albania.

Greece, in close cooperation with the Albanian Government, intends to further develop and enhance its relationship with and assistance to Albania by initiating specific economic and technical programmes. The visit of the Greek Foreign Minister to Tirana last week, heading a large delegation of cabinet ministers and parliamentarians, paved the way for renewed joint efforts by the two Governments to promote various projects for economic, military and police cooperation.

The Greek Government has also announced the granting of financial assistance of $80 million for the financing of specific development projects in Albania. Greece is committed to continuing to participate in all the efforts of the international community to assist Albania in the transition period it is going through. In this context, Greece is participating in the Partnership for Peace programme for Albania, in the OSCE presence there, in the Western European Union mission to reorganize the Albanian police force and in various European Union programmes.

The latest crisis in Albania illustrates better the need for consistent, comprehensive and effective international assistance to and cooperation with that country. Preventive action to that effect would help to avert future crises and to secure a better environment for swift and steady progress towards democracy and a free-market economy, along with full respect for human rights and the rights of persons belonging to minorities. As in the past, Greece pledges not to fail to do its part in meeting the formidable challenges that lie ahead.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Germany. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Eitel (Germany): Let me begin by saying that Germany fully associates itself with the statement made by the distinguished Permanent Representative of Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union.

On the basis of Council resolutions 1101 (1997) and 1114 (1997), the multinational protection force played a decisive role in protecting the delivery of humanitarian aid and guaranteeing the safety of international experts during the election process in Albania. In my capacity as representative of the State holding the presidency of the Western European Union (WEU) for the second half of 1997, I would like to congratulate Italy, in the person of its Permanent Representative, Ambassador Fulci, as well as the other nations participating in the multinational protection force, for successfully concluding this mission.

The Western European Union has been engaged in the joint management of the crisis in Albania from its start with a Multinational Advisory Police Element (MAPE). On 22 July, the WEU Council decided on an extension of the MAPE mandate until mid-October 1997. This will give the time necessary to complete the WEU's short-term advisory programme and gain experience. The mandate of MAPE includes the following elements. First, giving the Albanian police authorities information and advice on appropriate aspects of policing and restoring order; secondly, giving advice, for the purpose of training instructors, by defining the needs and proposing training modules in the following areas: organization, public order, border control, logistics and communications; thirdly, supporting the police academy by drawing up a teaching programme. In the framework of the MAPE mission, a number of WEU nations have provided equipment for the Albanian police.

In addition to this short-term programme, the WEU Council will also take up consideration of a longer-term programme. The WEU sees its mission in Albania within the framework of a variety of activities by a number of international organizations, among them the OSCE, the European Union and the Council of Europe, and also by individual States. From the very beginning of the MAPE mission, the WEU has been striving for close cooperation with the organizations involved in Albania under the overall coordination of the OSCE, as well as with the Albanian authorities. We consider it to be of the utmost importance to further continue and intensify this coordination of activities. The future of the country will have to be shaped by the Albanian people. The international community is continuing, and will continue, to support the process of stabilization. I would like to underline that within this context, the WEU is playing and will continue to play an active role.

Mr. Čalovski (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): The Republic of Macedonia has been closely following the situation in Albania with concern and with hope that the crisis will be overcame speedily, without violence, by the Albanians themselves, with the assistance of their neighbours and of the international community, including the Security Council, which quickly discharged its duty, in line with its obligation to act preventively.

It is of paramount importance for Albania and for our region that Albania held democratic parliamentary elections, that the negative developments have been halted and that the process of settling the difficulties has started. In our view, Albania has managed to turn a difficult page of its history and to enter the period of non-violent transition, stabilization, and economic and democratic development. For the Republic of Macedonia, as a neighbouring country, it is of huge importance that this process continues successfully. The support of the international community will be as important in the future as it has been up to now. Within the framework of its capabilities, my country will do its best to assist the new positive orientation of Albania.

When the crisis erupted and endangered the stability of Albania and of the whole region, the Republic of Macedonia promptly started to send humanitarian aid. Within days the Government decided to offer its corridors for the delivery of international humanitarian assistance. And what was more important, at that particular moment when the Albanian population faced the most difficult crisis of food shortages, we started effectively delivering and distributing food to the regions bordering my country, which was very much welcome and appreciated by the Albanian citizens. We should recall that at that time there was no military, police or any other law-and-order force on the Albanian side and the contacts between the two countries were held on the level of local border communities and through bodies of the Red Cross.

The Republic of Macedonia did not take part in the multinational protection force, in accordance with its principle of not participating in peacekeeping forces in neighbouring States. However, as co-sponsors of Security Council resolutions 1101 (1997) and 1104 (1997), we have supported the force's establishment from the beginning. And we would like to commend all States and organizations, and in particular the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), for their participation. We are pleased to note that the new President of Albania, Mr. Rexhep Mejdani and the newly elected Government, headed by the Prime Minster Fatos Nano, have started the democratization process and the stabilization and development of Albania, and that the multinational protection force under Italian leadership has fulfilled its mandate successfully.

We would also like to note the importance of the results of the first international conference held on 31 July in Rome and the adoption of the draft international agenda for Albania. We hope that the next conference, to be held in Brussels in September of this year, will also be fruitful.

At this point, I would like on behalf of my Government to express high appreciation to the Government of Italy for its leadership and readiness to help and act. All these positive developments have been greeted in my country with anticipation that the crisis in Albania will be over soon and that the new situation will make an important positive contribution to the development of the region as well. In this respect, of particular importance is the stated readiness of the Albanian Government to develop friendly and good neighbourly relations with all its neighbours and the realization of the provisions contained in the international agenda for Albania.

The future of Albania, like that of the other Balkan States, lies in its full integration in Europe. How soon this goal will be achieved depends on Albania itself and also on the position of the international community.

The Republic of Macedonia would like to be a part of the international efforts that will enable neighbouring

Albania to end the crisis and to enter a period of stability and development.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Romania. I invite her to take a seat at the Council table and to make her statement.

Mrs. Sandru (Romania): My delegation appreciates as very useful the convening of this public debate on the assessment of the situation in Albania, on the occasion of the withdrawal of the multinational protection force. Since my country has subscribed to the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union, I will briefly focus on some specific points of particular importance for my Government.

Romania wishes to express its satisfaction at the successful fulfilment of the mandate of the multinational protection force authorized by the Security Council. Set up at a moment critical for the destiny of the Albanian people and, at the same time, of high risk for regional security, Operation Alba helped block the deterioration of the situation in the country and provide a secure environment for the deployment of the international community's assistance for Albania, including during the electoral process.

My delegation would like to seize this opportunity to commend the remarkable role played by Italy in setting up and steering the multinational protection force. Our profound appreciation is also extended to all the international organizations that, within the framework provided by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), contributed to the restoration of stability and security in Albania and to avoiding the spillover of the crisis to neighbouring areas.

As a country located in proximity to the Balkans and as a traditional friend of the Albanian people, Romania was deeply concerned by the crisis in Albania since its inception and viewed it as a serious threat to the peace and security of the region and of the continent at large. Therefore, my country fully committed itself to contribute, commensurate with its capacity, to the international effort intended to settle this crisis by peaceful means.

In this context, as we have previously informed the Security Council, a special envoy of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Romania was sent to Tirana in March to assess the situation on the ground and facilitate the national dialogue.

Later, Romania joined the multinational protection force for Albania, together with other European countries. It participated with a mixed infantry battalion of 400 troops, which was deployed in the southern area of Albania, an area considered in the midst of the crisis to have been very perilous and difficult. The Romanian military carried out a variety of activities within the mandate assigned by the Security Council, ranging from providing security for humanitarian-assistance or electoral-monitoring missions to ensuring a safe environment for the local population. Its activities enjoyed the appreciation of both the force command and the civilian population.

We wish to lay particular emphasis on the excellent guidance provided by the steering committee of the multinational protection force and the good cooperation among all contributing countries, which ensured cohesion and solidarity in conducting this extremely complex operation. Likewise, it is worth mentioning the good collaboration with Albanian representatives and the efficient collaboration and coordination on the ground with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and other international organizations.

Romania welcomes the latest positive developments in Albania and encourages the Albanian people in its endeavours to achieve the goal of stabilization and respect for human rights and democratic standards. Moreover, my delegation shares the view that the conclusion of the electoral process in Albania and the withdrawal of the multinational protection force are ushering in a new stage which will focus on economic and institutional reconstruction. While the Albanian authorities bear the primary responsibility for the democratic normalization of the country, the support of the international community will continue to be indispensable to that process.

Romania is following with interest the proposals pertaining to this issue, and is ready to contribute in an appropriate manner to future international efforts to provide institutional and economic assistance to Albania.

The President: The next speaker is Mrs. Sylvie Junod, Head of the Delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross to the United Nations, to whom the Council has extended an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure. I invite her to take a seat at the Council table and to make her statement.

Mrs. Junod (International Committee of the Red Cross): The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) appreciates being able to take part in this debate on the situation in Albania. We would like to thank you, Sir, and the other members of the Security Council for giving us this opportunity.

At the beginning of this year, the collapse of a series of pyramid savings schemes brought ruin to thousands of Albanians, especially in the South of the country. The ensuing popular discontent culminated in violent rioting in several southern towns at the end of February. This led to the breakdown of law and order almost everywhere in Albania. Military arsenals were ransacked, and the population took up arms. Public buildings, warehouses and property were systematically looted, and a state of emergency was declared.

As a consequence of those few weeks of unrest, State structures disintegrated, giving way to anarchy, chaos and a lack of security. The economy ground to a halt. Systems for the provision, circulation and distribution of supplies throughout the country were affected by the situation, and the price of staple foods rose sharply.

The collapse of all national institutions had humanitarian implications which had to be addressed. That is what the ICRC has been trying to do, but its efforts cannot be considered as sufficient in the medium and long term. Nevertheless, there was no major humanitarian disaster in Albania. The ICRC made that clear to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and to the Security Council when taking note of their intention to take action in the country at the request of the Albanian coalition Government.

The ICRC has been urging the international community to respond to the crisis, notably by restoring law and order and by contributing to the reestablishment of national administrative services and State and commercial supply channels.

The dispatch of the multinational protection force made it possible to stabilize the situation and to hold legislative elections. However, Albania still faces law and order problems and is still in the process of rebuilding a functioning State administration. These tasks call for long-term assistance which goes far beyond the capacity of any humanitarian organization.

The ICRC has been working in Albania since the start of the crisis. Together with the Albanian Red Cross, it immediately carried out an assessment of the situation and noted that most affected by the Albanian crisis were medical and social welfare facilities, and the most destitute families. Accordingly, the ICRC and the Albanian Red Cross have set up specific assistance programmes to bring aid to these two categories, which had hitherto received State support.

On 17 March 1997, the ICRC launched an appeal for 15 million Swiss francs, or some $10 million. Within its assistance programme, it distributed the following: 122 tonnes of food and 39 tonnes of medicine for medical and social welfare facilities which receive no funds or assistance from the State; over 70,000 family parcels to especially needy families; and 70 tonnes of chlorine, supplied to Albanian water authorities.

Moreover the ICRC launched, with the Albanian Red Cross, a weapons-awareness programme to inform the population in general, and young people in particular, about the dangers involved in handling weapons of all kinds, which are circulating in large numbers throughout Albania. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies has also been taking part in this operation, its task being to reorganize and strengthen national society.

What is the situation at present? Today, more than a month after the elections, Albania's main problem remains the absence of law and order and the consequences of that state of affairs. The newly elected authorities have stated that restoring public order is their top priority. Despite all its efforts, the Government is far from being in control of the entire territory. Banditry of all types is rife, and a lack of security prevails in most of the country — while, as members know, the multinational protection force withdrew on 11 August.

Albanian State institutions must therefore receive support in their task of restoring public order and bringing State and commercial supply systems back into operation. Subsequently, once stability has been established, medium- and long-term development programmes can and must be set up.

Despite the endeavours of the authorities and of the international community, in our view little or no significant improvement in the situation can be expected within the next few weeks. Under the current circumstances the needs remain the same. The ICRC therefore considers it relevant to continue its programmes, corresponding to its appeal of 17 March.

The President: There are no further speakers on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on the agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.30 p.m.